

heere's that shall drue some of them to a non-come, on-  
ly get the learned writer to set downe our excommuni-  
cation, and meet me at the laile. *Exeunt.*

### Actus Quartus.

*Enter Prince, Bastard, Leonato, Frier, Claudio, Benedicke,  
Hero, and Beatrice.*

*Leonato.* Come Frier Francis, be briefe, onely to the  
plaine forme of marriage, and you shal recount their par-  
ticular duties afterwards.

*Fran.* You come hither, my Lord, to marry this Lady.

*Clau.* No.

*Leo.* To be married to her: Frier, you come to mar-  
rie her.

*Frier.* Lady, you come hither to be married to this  
Count.

*Hero.* I doe.

*Frier.* If either of you know any inward impediment  
why you should not be conioyned, I charge you on your  
soules to vtter it.

*Clau.* Know you anie, Hero?

*Hero.* None my Lord.

*Frier.* Know you anie, Count?

*Leon.* I dare make his answer, None.

*Clau.* O what men dare do! what men may do! what  
men daily do!

*Bene.* How now! interiections? why then, some be  
of laughing, as ha, ha, he.

*Clau.* Stand thee by Frier, father, by your leaue,  
Will you with free and unconstrained soule

Giue me this maid your daughter? *Leonato.* As freely sonne as God did giue her me.

*Clau.* And what haue I to giue you back, whose worth  
May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?

*Prin.* Nothing, vnlesse you render her againe.

*Clau.* Sweet Prince, you learn me noble thankfulnes:  
There *Leonato*, take her backe againe.

Giue not this rotten Orenge to your friend,  
Shee's but the signe and semblance of her honour:

Behold how like a maid she blushes heere!  
O what authoritie and shew of truth

Can cunning sinne couer it selfe withall!  
Comes not that bloud, as modest euidence,

To witnesse simple Vertue? would you not swcare  
All you that see her, that she were a maide,

By these exterior shewes? But she is none:  
She knowes the heat of a luxurious bed:

Her blush is guiltinesse, not modestie.

*Leonato.* What doe you meane, my Lord?

*Clau.* Not to be married,

Not to knit my soule to an approued wanton.

*Leon.* Deere my Lord, if you in your owne prooffe,  
Haue vanquish't the resistance of her youth,

And made defeat of her virginities.

*Clau.* I know what you would say: if I haue knowne  
You will say, she did imbrace me as a husband,

And so extenuate the forehead sinne: No *Leonato*,  
I neuer tempted her with word too large,

But as a brother to his sister, shew'd  
Bashfull sinceritie and comely loue.

*Hero.* And seem'd I euer otherwise to you?

*Clau.* Out on thee seeming, I will write against it,  
You seeme to me as *Diane* in her Orbe,

As chaste as is the budd' ere it be blowne:  
But you are more intemperate in your blood,

Than *Venus*, or those pampred animals,  
That rage in sauage sensualitye.

*Hero.* Is my Lord well, that he doth speake so wide?

*Leon.* Sweete Prince, why speake not you?

*Prin.* What should I speake?

*Leon.* Are these things spoken, or doe I but dreame?

*Bast.* Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.

*Bene.* This looks not like a nuptiall.

*Hero.* True, O God!

*Clau.* *Leonato*, stand I here?

Is this the Prince? is this the Princes brother?

Is this face *Heroes*? are our eyes our owne?

*Leon.* All this is so, but what of this my Lord?

*Clau.* Let me but moue one question to your daugh-  
ter, And by that fatherly and kindly power,

That you haue in her, bid her answer truly.

*Leo.* I charge thee doe, as thou art my child.

*Hero.* O God defend me how am I beset?

What kinde of catechizing call you this?

*Clau.* To make you answer truly to your name.

*Hero.* Is it not *Hero*? who can blot that name  
With any iust reproach?

*Clau.* Marry that can *Hero*,

*Hero* it selfe can blot out *Heroes* vertue.

What man was he, talkt with you yesternight,  
Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?

Now if you are a maid, answer to this.

*Hero.* I talkt with no man at that howre my Lord.

*Prin.* Why then you are no maiden. *Leonato*,

I am forry you must heare: vpon mine honor,  
My selfe, my brother, and this grieved Count

Did see her, heere her, at that howre last night,  
Talkt with a ruffian at her chamber window,

Who hath indeed most like a liberal villaine,  
Confest the vile encounters they haue had

A thousand times in secret.

*John.* Fie, fie, they are not to be named my Lord,  
Not to be spoken of,

There is not chastitie enough in language,  
Without offence to vtter them: thus pretty Lady

I am forry for thy much misgouernment.

*Clau.* O *Hero*! what a *Hero* hadst thou beene  
If halfe thy outward graces had beene placed

About thy thoughts and counsailes of thy heart?

But fare thee well, most foule, most faire, farewell  
Thou pure impiety, and impious puritie,

For thee Ile locke vp all the gates of Loue,  
And on my eye-lids shall Coniecture hang,

To turne all beauty into thoughts of harme,  
And neuer shall it more be gracious.

*Leon.* Hath no mans dagger here a point for me?

*Bast.* Why how now cosin, wherefore sink you down?

*Bast.* Come, let vs go: these things come thus to light,  
Smoother her spirits vp.

*Bene.* How doth the Lady?

*Bast.* Dead I thinke, helpe vncle.

*Hero.* why *Hero*? Vncle, Signior *Benedicke*, Frier.

*Leonato.* O Fate! take not away thy heauy hand,  
Death is the fairest couer for her shame

That may be wisht for.

*Bast.* How

*Beat.* How now cosin *Hero*?

*Fri.* Haue comfort Ladie.

*Leon.* Dost thou looke vp?

*Frieke.* Yea, wherefore should she not?

*Leon.* Wherefore? Why doth not euer earthly thing  
Cry shame vpon her? Could she heere denie

The storie that is printed in her blood?

Do not lye *Hero*, do not open thine eyes:

For did I thinke thou wouldst not quickly die,  
Thought I thy spirits were stronger then thy shames,

My selfe would on the reward of reproaches  
Strike at thy life. Grien'd I, I had but one?

Child I, for that at frugal Natures frame  
One too much by thee: why had I one?

Why euer wast thou louelic in my eyes?

Why had I not with charitable hand  
Tooke vp a beggars issue at my gates,

Who smere'd thus, and mir'd with infamie,  
I might haue said, no part of it is mine:

This shame deriues it selfe from vnknowne loines,  
But mine, and mine I lou'd, and mine I prais'd,

And mine that I was proud on mine so much,  
That I my selfe, was to my selfe not mine:

Valewing of her, why she, O she is false  
Into a pit of Inke, that the wide sea

Hath drops too few to wash her cleane againe,  
And salt too little, which may season giue

To her foule tainted flesh.

*Bene.* Sir, sir, be patient: for my part, I am so attired  
in wonder, I know not what to say.

*Bea.* O on my soule my cosin is belied.

*Bene.* Ladie, were you her bedfellow last night?

*Bea.* No truly: not although vnill last night,  
I haue this twelue month bin her bedfellow.

*Leon.* Confirm'd, confirm'd, O that is stronger made  
Which was before barr'd vp with ribs of iron.

Would the Princes lie, and *Claudio* lie,  
Who lou'd her so, that speaking of her foulnesse,

Wash'd it with teares? Hence from her, let her die.

*Frie.* Heare me a little, for I haue onely bene silent so  
long, and giuen way vnto this course of fortune, by no-

ting of the Ladie, I haue markt.

A thousand blushing apparitions,  
To start into her face, a thousand innocent shames,

In Angel whitenesse beare away those blushes,  
And in her eie there hath appear'd a fire.

To burne the errors that these Princes hold  
Against her maiden truth: Call me a foole,

Trust not my reading, nor my obseruations,  
Which with experimental seale doth warrant

The tenure of my booke: trust not my age,  
My reuerence, calling, nor diuinitie,

If this sweet Ladie lye not guiltlesse heere,  
Vnder some biting error.

*Leo.* Frier, it cannot be: *Hero* is dead.

Thou seest that all the Grace that she hath left,  
Is, that she wil not adde to her damnation,

A siene of periury, she not denies it:

Why seek'st thou then to couer with excuse,  
That which appeares in proper nakednesse?

*Frie.* Ladie, what man is he you are accus'd of?

*Hero.* They know that do accuse me, I know none:

If I know more of any man aliue

Then that which maiden modestie doth warrant,  
Let all my finnes lacke mercy: O my Father,

Proue you that any man with me conuert,

At houres vnmeet, or that I yesternight  
Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,

Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death.

*Frie.* There is some strange misprision in the Princes.

*Bene.* Two of them haue the verie bent of honor,  
And if their wisedomes be misled in this:

The practise of it liues in *John* the bastard,  
Whose spirits toile in frame of villanies.

*Leo.* I know not: if they speake but truth of her,  
These hands shall teare her: If they wrong her honour,

The proudest of them shall wel heare of it.

Time hath not yet so dried this bloud of mine,  
Nor age so eate vp my invention,

Nor Fortune made such hauocke of my meanes,  
Nor my bad life rest me so much off friends

But they shall finde, awak'd in such a kinde,  
Both strength of limbe, and policie of minde,

Ability in meanes, and choise of friends,  
To quit me of them thoroughly.

*Frie.* Pause awhile:

And let my counsell sway you in this case,  
Your daughter heere the Princeesse (last for dead)

Let her awhile be secretly kept in,  
And publish it, that she is dead indeed:

Maintaine a mourning ostentation,  
And on your Families old monument,

Hang mournfull Epitaphes, and do all rites,  
That appertaine vnto a buriall.

*Leon.* What shall become of this? What wil this do?

*Frie.* Marry this wel carried, shall on her behalfe,  
Change slander to remorse, that is some good,

But not for that dreame I on this strange course,  
But on this trauaile looke for greater birth:

She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,  
Vpon the infant that she was accus'd,

Shall be lamented, pittied, and excus'd  
Of euery hearer: for it so falls out,

That what we haue, we prize not to the worth,  
Whiles we enioy it: but being lack'd and lost,

Why then we racke the value, then we finde  
The vertue that possession would not shew vs

Whiles it was ours, so will it fare with *Claudio*:  
When he shal heare she dyed vpon his words,

Th Idea of her life shal sweetly creepe  
Into his study of imagination.

And euery louely Organ of her life,  
Shall come apparel'd in more precious habite:

More mouing delicate, and ful of life,  
Into the eye and prospect of his soule

Then when she liu'd indeed: then shal he mourne,  
If euer Loue had interest in his Liuer,

And wish he had not so accus'd her:

No, though he thought his accusation true:  
Let this be so, and doubt not but successe

Wil fashion the euent in better shape,  
Then I can lay it downe in likelihood.

But if all ayme but this be leueld false,  
The supposition of the Ladies death,

Will quench the wonder of her infamie.

And if it fort not well, you may concale her,  
As best befits her wounded reputation,

In some reclusue and religious life,  
Out of all eyes, tongnes, mindes and iniuries.

*Bene.* Signior *Leonato*, let the Frier aduise you,  
And though you know my inwardnesse and loue

Is very much vnto the Prince and *Claudio*.

Yet